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ABSTRACT

Employer attitudes toward Wisconsin's Youth Apprenticeship Program were examined through a survey that was sent to 260 of the 733 employers involved in the Youth Apprenticeship Program in 1996-1997. Of those employers, 149 (57.3%) returned usable replies. Overall, the employers were very pleased with the Youth Apprenticeship Program's design and operation. Although small firms (with fewer than 20 employees) constitute more than 80% of businesses in Wisconsin, only 28% of youth apprentices were working in small firms. Local schools and coordinators employed by the schools were employers' primary sources of information about the Youth Apprenticeship Program. The youth apprenticeship employers generally supported the three proposed changes in the program's design (allowing summer work hours, condensing the program, reducing core competencies). The Youth Apprenticeship Program won high praise because it provides a variety of social and economic benefits for firms and their employees. Suggestions for improving the program included the following: changing the competencies to meet individual firms' needs; recruiting better/more students; providing more training and support for mentors; and improving coordination with schools. (Eleven figures are included. Appended are the following: survey instrument and summary data; employers' suggestions for improving the Youth Apprenticeship Program.) (MN)

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1997 WISCONSIN YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP EMPLOYER SURVEY

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November, 1997

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SKILLS FUTURE
YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP

1997 WISCONSIN YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP EMPLOYER SURVEY

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Executive Summary

Efforts to advance school-to-work initiatives are highly dependent upon the availability and quality of work-based learning opportunities. In Wisconsin, effective relationships with employers from various industry sectors are vital to maintaining, expanding, and improving the statewide Youth Apprenticeship program. During the summer of 1997, the Center on Education and Work conducted a survey study of employers participating in the Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship program, More specifically, the study examined employers' reactions to and comments on their: reasons for participating in the program, views of proposed and needed changes in the program design, and general advice on strengthening the program.

In July 1997, one-third of the 1996-97 Youth Apprenticeship employers (n=733) involved in the program received a brief 2-page mail survey. The survey was mailed to 260 employers. After one follow-up mailing, a total of 149 useable replies were received yielding a response rate of 57.3%.

The major findings, conclusions, and recommendations included:

1. Overall, the employers participating in the Youth Apprenticeship program are very pleased with the design and operation of the program. More than 90 percent of the employers surveyed said they would recommend the program to other employers. The primary benefits they derive from working with youth apprentices include: providing a community service, training the skilled workforce for a competitive future, and recruiting new employees.

2. Small firms, especially the business establishments with fewer than 20 employees, are less like to participate in the Youth Apprenticeship Program, yet these businesses constitute more than 80% of the business establishments in the state. Only 28% of the youth apprentices are working in small firms. Efforts to expand the Youth Apprenticeship program should be concentrated on small firms in various industry sectors.

3. Employers indicate that local schools and coordinators employed by schools are their primary sources of information about the Youth Apprenticeship program. State wide and local business, trade and professional associations; local labor-management councils; and the technical colleges all need to be more actively engaged in promoting the development of Youth Apprenticeship.

4. Generally, the youth apprenticeship employers are supportive of the three proposed changes in the program design. However, it is important to note that employers from different sectors tend to view each proposed change differently.

5. Overall, employers continue to view the Youth Apprenticeship program in an extremely positive light. They have a high regard for the program because provides a variety of economic and social benefits for the firm and its employees.

Introduction

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 created new opportunities for schools and employers to develop relationships that would be mutually beneficial for students and firms. In Wisconsin, the Youth Apprenticeship state legislation and the subsequent "Skills for the Future/School to Work" initiative have generated new dialogues between schools, technical colleges and local businesses. The commitment to engage businesses and schools in collaborative endeavors is also expressed in the National Education Goals. Goal 6 affirms that:

> *"By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship."*

Further, the Goals 2000 legislation enacted by Congress in 1994 stipulates that to achieve this goal *"every major American business will be involved in strengthening the connection between education and work."* These are important and ambitious expectations for establishing new relationships between schools and businesses.

However, despite national efforts to link schools and employers, the second National Employer Survey (1997) indicates that only 26% of the nation's employers with more than 20 employees have been involved in school-to-work activities. One of the most significant challenges for the School to Work initiatives in Wisconsin and nationally is developing and sustaining employer involvement, especially in work-based learning programs such as Youth Apprenticeship.

The mutual benefits to employers and students are outlined in the Wisconsin *Handbook for Employers* who are involved or interested in the program:

Benefits to Employers:

- Improve the skill level of workers
- Recruit and screen potential employees
- Reduce employee turnover by hiring program graduates
- Help develop skill standards geared to industry's needs
- Improve their competitive position in the world market place
- Participate in education reform
- Improve community relations by helping local youth with employment and education

Benefits to Students:

- See first hand the connection between classroom education and work
- Strengthen their academic skills
- Explore their interest in a particular career area
- Earn wages while learning from skilled professionals
- Earn an industry recognized certificate upon completion
- Earn advanced standing credits in a technical college
- Increase their career options and future employability.

In Wisconsin, efforts to involve employers directly in school-to-work system building began in 1992, when the State Assembly enacted one of the nation's first Youth Apprenticeship programs. After five years of implementation, the Youth Apprenticeship program has expanded to 16 high growth industries involving 750 local employers in 1996-97.

Since October 1994, when Wisconsin received one of the first Federal School-to-Work Implementation grants, employer participation has expanded rapidly through job shadowing, skill certified cooperative education programs, community career centers, and other initiatives designed to enhance the school-to-work transition options for youth. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Work Based Learning Benchmarks

	1994-95	1996-97
Youth Apprentices	348	1,150
Skill Based Coop Students	0	736
Job Shadowing experiences	11,266	28,241
Career Centers	0	8
Participating employers	4,878	11,007

Two recent studies undertaken in Wisconsin reveal the status of employer involvement in working with schools. To gather information on the connections between schools and firms, a telephone survey conducted with two samples of Wisconsin employers -- those involved formally with local school to work efforts and those who were not involved with schools. The survey (Thorn, Mason & Jonely, 1997) revealed that:

- The name recognition of "school-to-work" was high and that the general impression of it was positive among employers in the survey.
- Of the firms surveyed, nearly 45% do not employ high school students largely because worker safety laws prohibit the employment of minors in their businesses.
- Firms outside of the manufacturing and construction industries appear to be more likely to participate in work-based learning programs.
- Firms employing youth apprentices and other work-based learning students perceive the program costs to be significantly lower than do firms that have not employed students in work-based learning. Similarly, non-participating firms see liability issues as a significant barrier, where participating firms do not cite liability concerns.

During the summer of 1996, a small sample of employers involved with the Youth Apprenticeship program participated a focus groups in Milwaukee and Madison (Phelps, Scribner, Wakelyn, & Weis, 1996). When asked to comment on the strengths of and needed improvements in the Youth Apprenticeship program, employers and worksite mentors indicated:

- Employers were concerned about the generally uninformed views held by parents, counselors, and students regarding the expanded expectations for success in the modern workplace.

- Employers expect the Youth Apprenticeship program (and school generally) to provide more attention to workplace basics and soft skills, such as problem-solving, teamwork, using technological systems, and work ethics and values.
- The intensive 2-year program is considered by employers to be the minimum amount of time required for these broad skills to be developed fully and for employers to gather sufficient benefits from the expertise acquired by the apprentice.
- Those participating in the focus groups were interested in: greater flexibility in how apprentices' time is structured and scheduled at the worksite, sustaining the Employer Training Grants, and conducting a cost-benefit analysis of the program.

The rapidly growing interest in expanding education-business partnerships, such as the Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship, creates a need for studies of the initial, innovative programs and initiatives. Examining employer concerns and recommendations regarding school-to-work initiatives can identify and document best practices, as well as spot issues and problems that need attention.

Survey Overview

As indicated above, employers are integral partners with educators, parents, and students in the national school-to-work initiative. The Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship Program relies heavily upon employers to provide skilled mentors for each student. In addition, employers assist the program by supporting mentor training, delivering work site training and instruction, paying wages to apprentices, and communicating regularly with educators and parents. As major stakeholders and investors in the Youth Apprenticeship Program, it is crucial that employers' views and concerns be examined on a regular basis.

This report summarizes the results of the second annual employer survey. The 2-page survey was designed to examine employers' reactions to and comments on: reasons for participating in the program, views of proposed and needed changes in the program design, and general advice on strengthening the program. The report that follows includes sections describing the:

- characteristics of employers and their participation in the Youth Apprenticeship program
- participation incentives
- perspectives on possible program design changes
- overall program benefits
- recommendations for program improvement
- incentives for employer participation

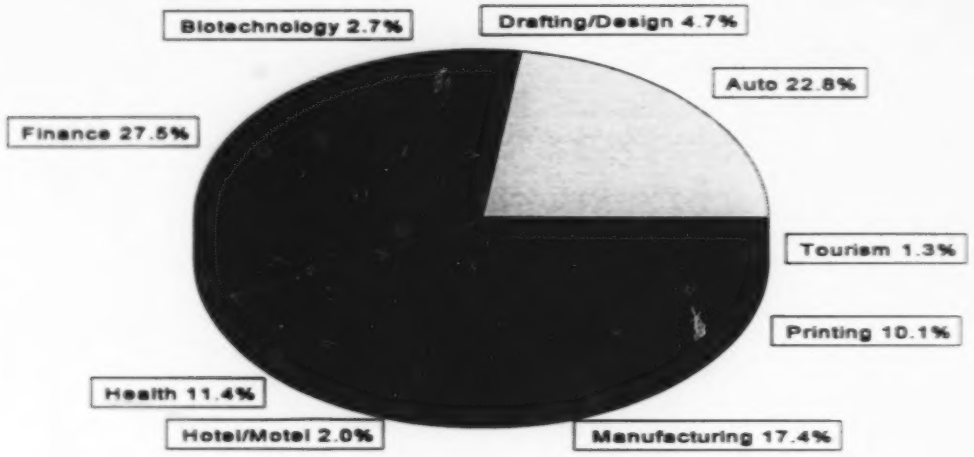
Appendix A presents a copy of the instrument and the summary responses for each item.

In July 1997, one-third of the employers (n=260) currently involved in the program (n=733) received the mail survey. Following one additional mailing, a total of 149 useable replies were received yielding a response rate of 57.3% . Statistical analysis revealed that the responding group of employers is not significantly different from the non-respondent group in terms of company size, the type of Youth Apprenticeship program in which they are involved, or the number of years of experience as an employer of youth apprentices. Thus, the respondents and their comments are representative of the views of employers statewide.

Characteristics of Employers

Since some of the programs are relatively new and/or have relatively few apprentices, the 14 programs were clustered into nine groups for analysis purposes. The distribution of employers responding to the survey by program is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Employers' Responses by Program

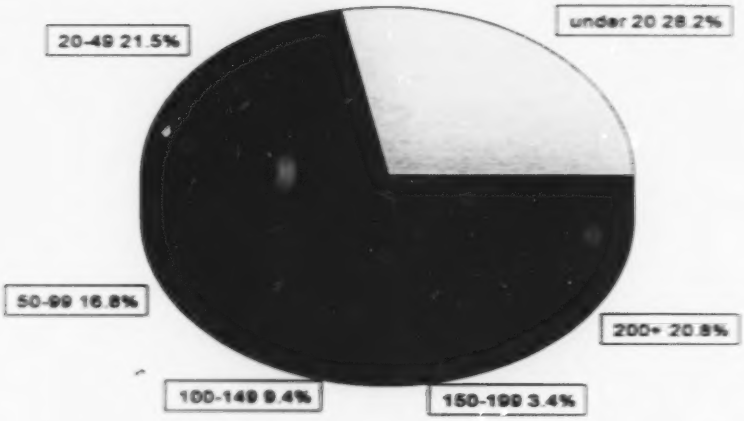


Business establishments of various sizes are involved in the Youth Apprenticeship program. As noted in Figure 3 on the following page, nearly 4 out of 5 businesses employing apprentices have fewer than 200 employees. Small employers sponsor apprentices in auto collision and service, hotel/motel, and tourism; while the employers with larger workforces tend to employ apprentices in the health, biotechnology, and manufacturing programs.

When compared to all employers in Wisconsin, the Youth Apprentices are working in the larger firms and businesses. As noted below, small business establishments in Wisconsin employ nearly 85% of the workforce, yet only 28% of the apprentices are working in small firms (i.e., with fewer than 19 employees).

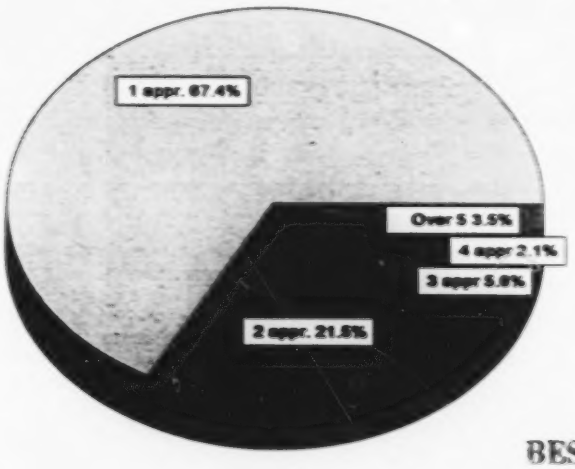
	Youth Apprentice Firms	*All Employment Establishments in WI*
Small firms (1-19 employees)	28.2%	83.9%
Medium size firms (20-99 employees)	38.3	13.6
Large size firms (100 + employees)	33.6	2.5

Figure 3. Size of Employers



Since most employers tend to be relatively small business operations, they are inclined to sponsor only one apprentice annually. As noted in Figure 4, 67.4% of the businesses have employed only one apprentice in the past year. Overall, firms support 1.71 apprentices during each school year.

Figure 4. Number of Apprentices



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When asked how they became familiar with the Youth Apprenticeship programs, more than 60% indicated that local school coordinators or high school staff were their initial source of information. As noted in Figure 5, another 12% of the respondents first learned about the program through contacts with local chambers, Private Industry Councils, or trade associations.

Figure 5. Employers' Information Sources

	Number	Percent
Local Coordinator	43	28.9%
Local School	28	18.8%
Chamber of Commerce	14	9.4%
Technical College	6	4.0%
Combined responses: local coordinator and school	21	14.1%
Other sources	37	24.8%

Participation Incentives

When asked to indicate their primary reason for participating in the Youth Apprenticeship program (see Figure 6), three recurring reasons are identified. About 1/3 (36.2%) see their participation as a community service. They view the program has helping the schools and students succeed in their mission to prepare young adults for life after high school. About 15% view the program as providing them with a skilled workforce, while another 5.4% say their primary motivation and interest is to recruit new employees. The remaining 40% of employers cite a combination of two of these reasons (about 10% for each combination), and another 10% list some other reason for their participation.

There are no statistically significant reasons for why small, medium, or large firms choose to participate in the program, although small and medium size firms (more so than large firms) are inclined to view the program as helping them recruit new employees and providing a skilled workforce for their industry.

When the incentives are viewed by industry area, clear and statistically significant reasons are cited. Employers participating in the automotive, printing, and manufacturing programs are clearly interested in training skilled workers and recruiting new employees, while financial service, biotechnology, and health services employers view their participation as education and community service focused.

Figure 6. Incentives for Participation in the Youth Apprenticeship Program

Providing a Community Service	36.2 %
Training Skilled Workers	15.4%
Recruiting New Employees	5.4%
Combination of responses above	33.6%
Other reasons	8.1%

A typical response from an employer in the Printing industry is noted below:

"We look at this as a "win-win" situation. The students are learning and gaining a work ethic, as well as knowledge in the printing industry. We, as a company, are gaining knowledgeable employees and providing a community service."

Perspectives on Possible Program Design Changes

Employers were asked to provide an opinion on the three proposed changes in the Youth Apprenticeship Program, as noted below. For each proposed change they were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposed revisions.

Proposed Change 1 (Allowing Summer Work Hours):

Allowing summer work hours to count toward the 900 required hours of work experience to be worked during two school years. This will allow local flexibility for seasonal industries and for students or business involvement who cannot fit all the required hours in their school and extracurricular schedules.

Proposed Change 2 (Condensing the Program):

Allowing students to begin the Program up until the summer after their junior year in high school. Students would still be required to complete four classes and the 900 hours of work experience to receive a state certificate.

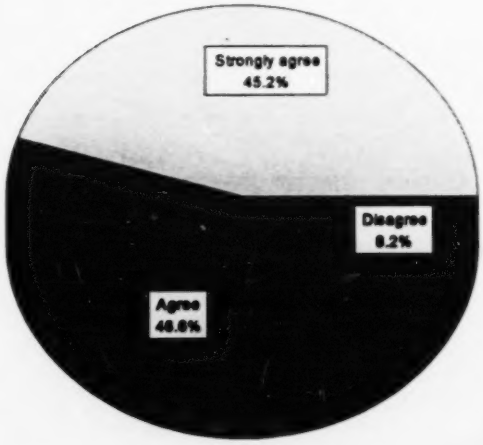
Proposed Change 3 (Reducing Core Competencies):

Reducing the number of state wide, core competencies all youth apprentices must master in their program and allow communities to identify additional competencies that are important locally. Business would have the flexibility to "customize" some of the training to meet specific needs.

Allowing Summer Work Hours

More than ninety percent (91.8%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed change. Among the respondents (Figure 7), those in hotel/motel-tourism industry are more likely to express the strong agreement with this change, while those in printing industry are more likely to express disagreement. The smaller the company, the more likely it agrees with this proposed change.

Figure 7. Response to Change I



The box below provides some typical comments from employers agreeing and disagreeing with the suggestion that summer work hours be counted in the 900 hour program requirement.

Comments from Employers in Agreement

- *In the banking industry, most daily tasks take place in the morning hour. Students usually are not available to work until the afternoon. Students miss out on valuable learning experience.*
- *It was sometimes difficult to work around the student's extra curricular activities. We want to support their chance of being a student also.*

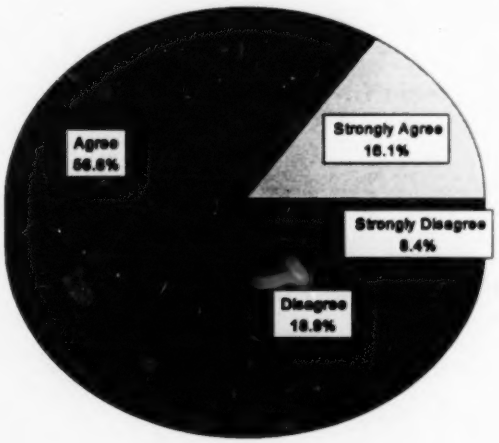
Comments from Employers in Disagreement

- *Our students have been able to get in the hours and still be active in extracurricular. It teaches them organizational skills. We need continued hours to fully train them with training and experience to meet criteria.*
- *We need year round staff.*
- *It may work for seasonal industries, but for year round work, the system that is in place is good.*

Condensing the Program

As noted in Figure 8 below, 72.7% of respondents agreed with the proposed change(Figure 8). Only 27% of respondents disagreed with the change which would permit students to begin the program during the summer following their junior year in high school. Among employers, those in the finance industry are more likely to object to this idea, while those in the hotel/motel/ tourism are more likely to agree with this idea. Employers in the first year of working with apprentices are more likely to disagree with this change than employers in the second or third of experience with the program.

Figure 8. Response to Change II



Comments from Employers in Agreement:

- *Sometimes students have a hard time deciding at such an early age to get into the program.*
- *A student may have a change in attitude/opinion of their future. Don't penalize them for not knowing what they want after their sophomore year.*

Comments from Employers in Disagreement:

- *Wow, it would be difficult for us, as the employer, to cram all the training and experience needed for the students to receive high enough marks to really warrant a certificate.*
- *This would water down and condense the teaching to the point where I feel it would be ineffective.*
- *It would take a very exceptional students to handle the stress of 900 work hours, high school classes and outside high school classes, starting after their junior year.*
- *Too much for students and employers (to do) in too short of time.*

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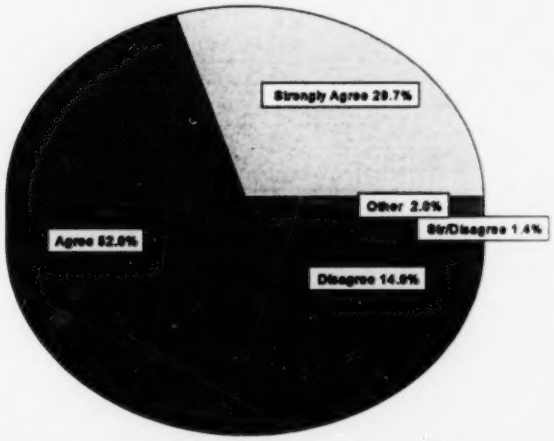
Reducing the Core Competencies

Slightly more than 4 out of 5 (81.7%) of employers supported the idea of reducing the number of core competencies required in the program and providing employers with increased flexibility, while 16.3% of the respondents disagree(Figure 9). Employers in the Printing and Drafting/Design industries were significantly less likely to support this proposed change, while in auto, biotechnology and health industries are more likely to agree with this change. Companies of small and medium size (those with less than 100 employees) are more likely to agree with this change than are the larger firms. Those employers involved in the second or third year of working with apprentices are less likely to agree with this change than those in the first year.

Figure 9. Response to Change III



Comments from Employers in Agreement:

- *Some of the stuff they have in the program is out-dated.*
- *Sometimes businesses respond to market change faster than their educational counterparts.*
- *It is difficult for smaller businesses such as ours to meet some of the competencies— yet we have other things to offer.*
- *There are some always diversities in the business that students haven't been exposed to through school.*
- *While this would be somewhat appealing, I feel there should be only minor customizing of the training, as we are trying to provide a well-rounded experience and not a regional experience.*

Comments from Employers in Disagreement:

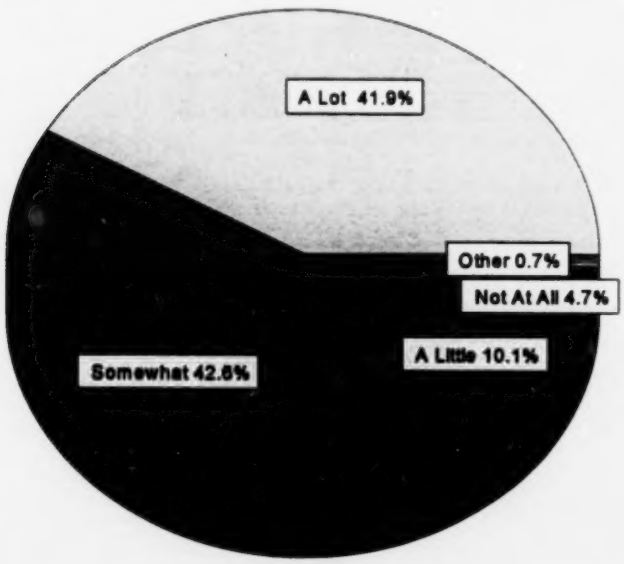
- *To maintain the legitimacy and the high level of training, the competencies should remain the same.*
- *The value of the broad based educational benefits of the program could be lost.*

Overall Program Benefits

How beneficial is the Youth Apprenticeship Program to your company?

As noted below in Figure 10, 42% of employers said this program helped our company 'a lot', while another 43% indicated 'somewhat'. Less than 5% of the responding employers said they found the program to not be beneficial. Employers in the auto industry were more likely to say that the program is beneficial to their company, while those in the Printing and Manufacturing firms are less likely to do so. Small companies are less likely to see the program as beneficial than are medium and large companies.

Figure 10. How Beneficial is Youth Apprenticeship?



Comments from employers on this question offered a variety of perspectives on the benefits of the Youth Apprenticeship.

Typical Employer Comments--Program Assets

"We have hired a full-time tech that came through the program that will likely be a big asset to our firm for years to come."

"I' ve seen two young men grow up in the last 2 years and the goals that they have set (are impressive). They definitely are part of our team!."

"The students are very productive and have increased morale within the office".

"What started out as a civic duty turned out to be quite beneficial for us. Our apprentice was a big asset to our institution and we will miss her, but we will be starting another one this year."

"It allowed our adult employees to be exposed to and have an impact on our youth. A young person's perspective is a wonderful experience."

Typical Employer Comments--Concerns

"The value here is totally for the student! They will know if they have chosen the correct vocation."

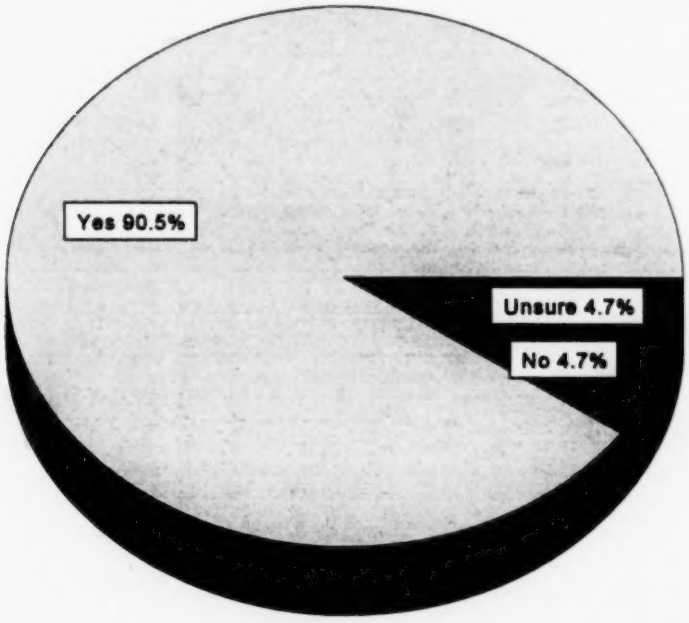
"In addition to student salaries which were budgeted over and above our core staff salaries, we have invested a lot of staff time in problem solving and reorganizing activities."

"Student could not understand basics (measure and understand fractions)."

Would you recommend this program to other employers?

As noted below, 90.5% of the employers indicated they would recommend this program to other employers. Only 4.7% said "no", while 4.7% indicated they were "unsure". On this question, there is not a notable difference among employers in different industries, nor in employers in different size firms. However, employers in the second year are less likely to recommend the program to other employers than those working in the first year.

Figure 11. Would You Recommend the Program to Other Employers?



Recommendations for Program Improvement

The last question invited employers to identify any specific recommendations for program revision, enhancement or change. The array of suggested refinements were reviewed and grouped into common suggestions *(see the chart below)*.

Suggested Improvements	*Number*	*Percent of Total Comments Offered*
Change in Competencies	16	22.4
Recruiting Better/More Students	12	18.0
More Training/Support for Mentors	6	8.5
Improving Administration	6	8.5
Better Coordination with Schools	5	7.0
Flexible Scheduling	4	5.6
Change of Certification System	4	5.6
Listen to the Employer's Voice	3	4.2
Financial Support	3	4.2
Advertising/Promotion	2	2.8
Others	5	7.0
No Needs	5	7.0
Total	71	99.8

About half of the responding employers offered a response to this question. About 22% of the employers responding to this question reinforced the earlier data citing the importance of changing and updating the competencies required for particular programs. About 18% of the employers responding cited a need to either recruit more students or more able students into the program. All other responses provided by the employers and noted in the table were supported by less than 10% of those responding to this item, which, in turn, represents 5% of those returning a survey form. The full set of open ended comments provided by the respondents can be found in Appendix B.

Incentives for Expanding Employer Participation

When asked, "what incentives would encourage more employers to participate in the Youth Apprenticeship program?", 80 of the responding employers (54%) provided comments to this open ended question. The comments expressed four major potential incentives, as noted in the chart below.

Incentives	*Number*	*Percent of Responding Employers*
Financial Support (tax credit, apprentice wage reimbursement)	36	45.0
Expanded advertising, promotion, marketing	29	36.2
More flexibility/less paperwork	8	10.0
No incentives needed	7	8.8
Total	80	100.0

Of those commenting on needed incentives, most cited the need for some financial benefits flowing directly to employers (in the form of tax credits or wage subsidies) or to students (in the form of initial equipment and tool purchases). Slightly more than 1/3 argued that the program needs additional marketing and visibility in the public media locally, statewide, and within the industry trade publications. The other employers choosing to offer comments said that the flexibility within the program needs to be enhanced and that the paperwork is problematic (10%), and about 8% noted that employers should not need additional incentives since the program has substantial benefits in its present form.

Key Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

1. Overall, the employers participating in the Youth Apprenticeship program are very pleased with the design and operation of the program. More than 90 percent of the employers surveyed said they would recommend the program to other employers. The primary benefits they derive from working with youth apprentices include: providing a community service, training the skilled workforce for a competitive future, and recruiting new employees. The growing statewide alliance of Youth Apprenticeship firms can be a valuable resource in recruiting new firms and businesses. State and local program leaders should expand their marketing efforts by involving current employers in the efforts to inform other employers, parents, students, and school personnel about the benefits of the Youth Apprenticeship program.

2. Small firms, especially the business establishments with fewer than 20 employees, are less like to participate in the Youth Apprenticeship Program, yet these businesses constitute more than 80% of the business establishments in the state. Only 28% of the youth apprentices are working in small firms. Efforts to expand the Youth Apprenticeship program should be concentrated on small firms in various industry sectors. The state organizations supporting small and independent business operators and entrepreneurs should become active in the Youth Apprenticeship initiative.

3. Employers indicate that local schools and coordinators employed by schools are their primary sources of information about the Youth Apprenticeship program. State wide and local business, trade and professional associations; local labor-management councils; and the technical colleges all need to be more actively engaged in promoting the development of Youth Apprenticeship and other work-based learning programs in communities throughout Wisconsin.

4. Generally, the youth apprenticeship employers are supportive of the three proposed changes in the program design. Allowing summer work hours to count toward the required 900 hours of work experience won the highest level of support from employers with more than 90 percent agreeing that the change should be made. However, it is important to note that employers from different sectors tend to view each proposed change differently. For example, employers in the hotel/motel and tourism are significantly more likely to agree with counting the summer work hours, while small employers and those in the printing industry disagree with the change. At both the state and local level these program and policy changes should be implemented following consultation with employers in each industry.

5. Overall, employers continue to view the Youth Apprenticeship program in an extremely positive light. They have a high regard for the program because provides a variety of economic and social benefits for the firm and its employees. For the second year in a row, more than 90 percent indicated they would recommend the program to other employers. When treated statistically, employers from all industries indicated they were recommending the program to other employers.

6. While overall satisfaction with the program is high among employers, some improvement are needed. Specifically, employers are seeking updates and changes in the competencies used in the programs. Unfortunately, the response rate does not permit an analysis which would confirm the programs most in need of updated competency specification. Also, employers are concerned about both the limited number of students willing to enter the program.

It is important to note that the Division of Connecting Education and Work using industry development teams comprised of employers and work site mentors to review and update as needed each Youth Apprenticeship curriculum on a 3½ year cycle. The Printing/Graphic Arts curriculum has undergone two revisions, and three of the other early programs have been reviewed and updated once since they were introduced.

Clearly, efforts are needed to recruit students for the Youth Apprenticeship program. In many communities throughout the state it appears that the number of slots available to employ apprentices exceeds the number of students applying. Two recent follow-up studies have confirmed the success and positive outcomes obtained by the Youth Apprenticeship classes of 1995 and 1996. The documented results, which illustrate how graduates are able to enter both employment and post secondary education with significant advantages, need to be widely shared with parents, guidance counselors, high school freshmen and sophomores, and high school teachers.

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Phelps, L.A., Scribner, J., Wakelyn, D. & Weis, C. (1996, November). *Youth apprenticeship in Wisconsin: A stakeholder assessment*. Madison: Center on Education and Work, University of Wisconsin.

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Appendix A: Survey Instrument and Summary Data

1997 WISCONSIN YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP EMPLOYER SUMMER SURVEY

Please provide us with your responses to the following questions by returning to the Center on Education and Work at the UW-Madison in the enclosed postage paid envelope by August 31, 1997.

1. How many youth apprentices have you employed during this past school year? _____

2. Circle below the number of employees in your company or firm:

1-19	20-49	50-99	100-149	150-199	200+
28.2%	**21.5%**	**16.8%**	**9.4%**	**3.4%**	**20.8%**

3. Where did you initially learn about the Youth Apprenticeship Program? *(check all approp. boxes)*

❑	Local program coordinator	**28.9%**	❑	Private industry council	
❑	Local school	**18.8%**	❑	Other business leaders	
❑	Technical college representative	**4.0%**	❑	Chamber of commerce	**9.4%**
❑	Local media		❑	Trade association	
❑	Other, describe _____	**24.8%**		(combine local coor. & school **14.1%**)	

4. What is the primary reason your company chose to participate in the program?
(For Example: training skilled workers, recruiting new employees, providing a community service, etc.)

providing a community service 36.2%; training skilled workers 15.4%;
recruiting new employees 5.4%; combination of responses above 33.6%; other reasons 8.1%

5. Some changes are being considered for the Youth Apprenticeship Program which will allow more employers and students to participate, while maintaining the Program's high standards. Please note the extent of your agreement with the proposed changes (items a, b, & c) and provide any comments.

   a. Allowing summer work hours to count toward the 900 required hours of work experience to be worked during two school years. This will allow local flexibility for seasonal industries and for students or businesses who cannot fit all the required hours in their school and extracurricular schedules.

❑ *Strongly agree*	❑ *Agree*	❑ *Disagree*	❑ *Strongly Disagree*
45.2%	**46.6%**	**8.2%**	**0%**

   Please comment:

b. Allowing students to begin the Program up until the summer after their junior year in high school. Students would still be required to complete four classes and the 900 hours of work experience to receive a state certificate.

❑ *Strongly agree*	❑ *Agree*	❑ *Disagree*	❑ *Strongly Disagree*
16.1%	**56.6%**	**18.9%**	**8.4%**

Please comment:

_____

_____

c. Reducing the number of statewide, core competencies all youth apprentices must master in their program and allow communities to identify additional competencies that are important locally. Businesses would have the flexibility to "customize" some of the training to meet specific needs.

❑ *Strongly agree*	❑ *Agree*	❑ *Disagree*	❑ *Strongly Disagree*
29.7%	**52. 0%**	**14.9%**	**1.4%**

Please comment: (Other **2.0%**)

_____

_____

d. Please identify any additional changes or improvements you would like to see made in the Youth Apprenticeship Program.

_____

see Appendix B

_____

6. In general, to what extent has the Youth Apprentice Program been beneficial to your company ?

❑ A lot	❑ Somewhat	❑ A Little	❑ Not at all
41.9%	**42.6%**	**10.1%**	**4.7%**

Please Comment: (Other **0.7%**)

_____

_____

7. Would you recommend this Program to other employers?

❑ *Yes* **90.5%** ❑ *No* **4.7%** *Comments:* _____ (Unsure **4.7%**)

8. What incentives can be offered to encourage more employers to participate in the Youth Apprenticeship Program?

financial support 45%; expanded advertising, promotion, marketing 36.2%; more flexibility/less paperwork 10.0%; no incentives needed; 8.8%

9. The Department of Workforce Development may use the comments I have provided above.
   ❑ Yes ❑ No Signed:_____

   Printed Name of Company/Firm: _____

Appendix B: Suggestions for Improving the Youth Apprenticeship Program

(Question: Please identify any additional changes or improvements you would like to see made in the Youth Apprenticeship Program.)

A. Changing the Competencies

(31) Competencies changes. (One support, teachers, administrator, mentor and employer more timely meetings/training.) (Quarterly) Updates each period to employer/mentor re: school work.

(96) Some of the textbook material they have in banking and finance is not realistic to teach them.

(97) More leeway in setting the competencies--allow substitutions or choices. Not all financial institutions follow the same procedures. This would allow more smaller businesses to participate.

(110) Have each banking institution make out their own check off list for duties performed--a lot of the material does not apply what's in the book. For what is done in our bank, especially bookkeeping department.

(117) More time spent on loans.

(120) If too much flexibility is given, students may not receive important education/training.

(125) Modify the leading competency to cover only loan documentation and/or support. I would prefer to see the students who are planning on going to college be the ones in this program. Decrease the overall cost of the program to tax payers.

(159) Review of health occupations core competencies, some not realistic.

(165) A continued trend toward flexibility so the students and employers needs can both be met. Health care competencies need to be current and realistic.

(173) Competencies that truly fit the job.

(180) The Health Programs competencies for 2nd year are extremely difficult to score at a 3. Drawing blood x-rays, etc. The student can be exposed to these areas but can by no means be competent to perform them.

(249) Trying to keep competencies more up-to-date for example: our equipment is very up-to-date and according to the competencies the equipment is very out dated.

(250) Need to provide more flexibility to offer customized competencies and movement between companies participating to give students more opportunities.

(133) Law, lending, semester. If this could be relevant to lending.

(187) Many 16 year olds are too immature to handle the stress of an NA especially having to clean up body fluids and dealing with the dying or declining resident.

(135) Student starts in the operational area.

B. Suggestions Regarding Students

(67) Recruit better students in the program at the sophomore and freshman level (student w/higher grade point average).

(84) A more complete record of a student's past history than what was originally provided would have helped in the selection process.

(236) Place higher standard of academic requirements on individuals.

(98) Keeping kids in high school would be the most important change. Identifying kids as freshman would also be, teachers and parents must guide this decision

(112) A grade point minimum established.

(68) Be sure students are really interested in this program and not just looking to get out of school.

(224) Need more reinforcement or need stricter requirements about student attendance in school. Far too many absences that we won't accept in business.

(184) Incorporate the "at-risk" students as they would benefit from the program. Many times the "brightest" are spread too thin.

(209) Need to get more students on the program.

(211) Get more activity going to educate students regarding the career positives related to industry. Send those idiots in state government a scorching letter in the form of industry signatures regarding their canceling the program.

(248) Ability to send more students--cost in some apprenticeships is too high for local school districts--duplicate student cost.

(254) More of them, included in it.

C. More Training/Support for Mentors

(174) Better mentor training and work place curriculum so the work place understands what skills need to be checked off for error and when.

(181) I wish there was a way to assign a student to one mentor for the entire year--like automotive. The student can then become a real member of the team, learn more skills and actually feel productive and be of use to the department.

(193) Be sure mentors are aware of time commitment needed ASAP if employing several students. We had only one and it was manageable.

(228) Better training for teachers/businesses on how to actually implement a successful system.

(235) More training on program and competencies for the instructor.

(242) I'd like a little more support direction for mentors. I've had to do on the job training as a mentor dealing with students for the first time.

D. Better Coordination With Schools

(26) A better conversation between school and shop. I've have one kid that is a problem student. We should have been re-advised of that. So we could serve his needs better. We now have that conversation.

(48) No one has ever come to talk to me about our person.

(49) To see the school officers get more involved with the automotive area, I get the impression that they do not feel that this is an important field, that needs highly skilled and trained individuals. This work cannot be done without the proper education and training.

(137) More coordinating from vocational school. Good involvement from high school.

(183) Improved coordination/communication between all parties, it's difficult because there are so many players.

E. Improving Administration

(76) Too many meetings, notices, etc. spend less money on these things, and more on hourly wages for the kids.

(47) Less state involvement.

(151) Less paperwork and coordinators, more hands on.

(156) State should follow through with the program as presented. Improvements and changes can be made prior to new year.

(245) State wide YAP meeting to discuss concerns and to gain a greater understanding to the process.

(216-2) I strongly believe that meetings to keep every one on the same pass is important. But too many meetings gets old. After 2 years of YA experience

F. Flexible Scheduling

(131) More flexibility in the hours would be a big help. More communication from the schools.

(139) I would like to see the apprentice be able to work at different times. Perhaps work a few hours in the morning with a class scheduled at a different time. We were not always busy the time she was here therefore training was difficult.

(190) Need to conform hours of program to peak work hours of employer to maximize benefit of program to both parties.

(74) It would be helpful if students could be allowed to work am hours on occasion.

G. Listen to the Companies More Carefully.

(176) Overall, youth apprenticeship has been a very confusing disorganized and frustrating experience for our organization. Much of what has been developed has been done from an education system perspective that is foreign to us. We have experienced multiple problems in implementing this program.

(246) The employer should assist in identified core requirements available before taking on an apprentice.

(136) Involve business as to keep program updated as to the many changes occurring in the business world.

H. Financial Support

(62) It would be nice if funds were available to pay for part of the wages we are paying these students as we are teaching them and we are spending our time and not getting a productive work out of these students.

(203) Don't change the funding it makes it worth while.

(214) Have the schools or agency take on the responsibility for worker's compensation.

I. Advertising/Promotion

(45) Make people aware--students, parents, counselors.

(83) More promotion, public awareness of participating firms, students.

J. Change of Certification System.

(118) Tie the on the job grading with the certificate requirements to prevent an A student from failing or barely passing certification.

(119) Evaluation forms for finance--some requirements for the students are far too advanced for the short time they are here.

(87) Consider a "second tier" program with say 400 hours of work experience; provide mechanism for 2 small employers to share a YA.

(150) Perhaps students could be certified in one or two specific areas of banking, rather than general banking, so that they can really get a firm grasp of an area.

K. Others

(18) Try to get the smaller business' involved.

(90) Student dropped out after 1 year due to scheduling problems. I suggest it be mandatory to complete the program.

(233) Change the law to allow students to operate material handling equipment. This is an entry level job that can't be filled this way.

(237) I would like the companies to pertain to the business more.

L. No Suggestions

(24) I feel the program is great.

(65) Everything is just fine.

(72) The above items cover my concerns--maybe start the work experience in January. This would allow for more specialized instruction prior to their joining a work groups at their business sites.

(134) Program is monitored very well. Originally designed for youth w/no plans for college or vocational school. Seems to be more open our second year

(141) You have done an excellent job with your a, b, c questions.

(222) The youth apprenticeship program is well organized. It is a great benefit to both the employer and the student.